

The Library Assistant:

The Official Organ of the Library Assistants' Association.

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DECEMBER MEETING.—ANNOUNCEMENT.

The next meeting of the Association will be held at **NORTH LIBRARY, ISLINGTON**, Manor Gardens, Holloway Road, N., on **Wednesday, December 12th** (not December 5th, as announced in Sessional Programme). Mr. James Duff Brown will occupy the Chair, and papers as under will be read:—

- 7.30 p.m. **Junior paper: Harry Fostall, Bromley Library, Kent.**
"The Junior Work of Annotation."
- 8.15 p.m. **Senior papers: (1) James D. Stewart, Chief Assistant, Islington Public Libraries.** "Descriptive Annotation."
(2) William A. Peplow, Librarian-in-Charge, Central Lending Library, Croydon. "Evaluative Annotation."

Those wishing to view the building are requested to arrive not later than 7 p.m. Light refreshments will be served prior to the meeting.

The library is easy of access by the undermentioned routes:—

Moorgate Street (Finsbury Park Tube) to Highbury; Stations on the South London (Electric) Railway to Highbury, changing at Moorgate; Aldwych by electric tram to Highbury Corner; Broad Street and Dalston Junction to Highbury (North London Railway). Thence by Highgate tram to Manor Gardens, which is about a mile and a quarter distant.

Victoria by motor 'bus to the "Nag's Head" (a few minutes' walk from the library).

YORKSHIRE BRANCH INAUGURAL MEETING.

A Yorkshire Branch of the Library Assistants' Association is in process of formation, and a preliminary meeting to elect a Committee and to discuss the future policy of the Branch will be held at the **Leeds Institute**, Cookridge Street, Leeds, on **Thursday, December 13th**, at 8 p.m.

- The following papers will be read and discussed:
"The Preservation of Ancient Classical Literature." By **James Ross, Public Library, York.**
"The Library Assistant's Outlook." By **W. E. Owen, Assistant Librarian, Leeds Institute.**

A prominent chief librarian will be asked to preside, and every library assistant in Yorkshire and the District is invited to attend. It is hoped later to arrange meetings at convenient centres, so that every part of the district will be visited in due course. Library assistants who are unable to attend are invited to write expressing their sympathy with, or objections to the proposed Branch, to Mr. J. B. Ellison, 2 Edinburgh Grove, Armley, Leeds.

NOVEMBER MEETING.

The second meeting of the Session was held at the Bromley Library, Poplar, E., by kind invitation of Mr. H. Rowlatt (Borough Librarian), on Wednesday evening, November 14th. The Bromley branch, which is in charge of Mr. W. B. Thorne, the Chairman of the L.A.A., is a new Carnegie Library, and is excellently planned. The whole building was thrown open to members, and every facility afforded for a thorough inspection of its many interesting features.

There was a most gratifying attendance when Mr. Rowlatt took the chair and called upon the Hon. Secretary to read the minutes of the previous meeting.

The first paper was by Mr. Twort, on "Collections of Illustrations." This is printed in a condensed form on another page. A brief discussion followed the reading of the paper, opened by Mr. Fostall (Bromley, Kent), who thought that the collecting of illustrations, if carried too far, might lead to grangerising. Mr. Sayers (Croydon) said that whether we liked it or not there was nothing people liked better than pictures. This was perfectly natural. Every library should have a collection of local illustrations, and should make a point of lending them out to the various schools and literary and other societies in the district. Mr. Bailey (Poplar) was of opinion that while many of the illustrations and plates to be found in certain periodicals were worth preserving it would be better, instead of spending money upon illustrations, to buy well illustrated books.

Papers by Mr. W. B. Thorne on "Some aids to Readers: Printed and Mechanical," and Mr. W. R. B. Prideaux, B.A., on "Personal relations between Staff and Readers" were then read. These also are printed in this issue, although it is only fair to the writers of the paper to say that owing to pressure on our space they have been considerably abridged.

An interesting discussion followed. Mr. Coutts (Islington) said that Mr. Thorne's plan was evidently to help readers to help themselves. The best way to do this was to allow access to the shelves. He was glad the value of bibliographies and catalogues had been emphasised. The catalogue was certainly the chief printed aid, but the best mechanical aid must be found in the person of the assistant. The issue of extra tickets was important, and it was an excellent plan to follow the topics of the day. Mr. Young (Greenwich) thought Mr. Thorne had been chiefly concerned as to how to induce readers of fiction to read other books. A plan which he believed worked successfully at Brighton was to have fiction behind a counter, and to allow open access to other classes. The value of bibliographical aids had not been sufficiently recognised. In the Reference Library especially the readers' attention should be drawn to some of the most important of these. Mr. Peters (Lewisham) considered that there was no better way of bringing before readers the contents of the library than by means of bulletins. A show-case was also useful. Mr. Sayers (Croydon) could not appreciate the objection to fiction reading. Fiction was a necessary part of our literature, and of the Lending Library stock. Many readers had probably derived most of their history from Sir Walter Scott, for instance. He agreed with placing in works of fiction lists of more serious works on the subject, but thought the list should be placed at the beginning, and not at the end of the book. He agreed with Mr. Prideaux that assistants should adopt an attitude of politeness to all. Mr. Stewart (Islington) said Mr. Thorne had omitted to mention the most important aid, viz., the staff. The importance of providing bibliographical aids had been mentioned. A recent experience had shown him that these were the very last books purchased by libraries. Much could be done by means of reading lists and bulletins, but few libraries issued them. Show-cases had been advocated; the whole library was his ideal show-case.

A vote of thanks to the readers of the papers was carried unanimously. The heartiest thanks of the meeting were also accorded Mr. Rowlatt for entertaining the members at Poplar and for presiding at the meeting. Mr. Rowlatt, in returning thanks, remarked on the pleasure it gave him to see them, and invited them to partake of light refreshment before leaving. A most successful meeting then terminated.

COLLECTIONS OF ILLUSTRATIONS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

By HENRY A. TWORT, Croydon Public Libraries.

First and foremost a library should collect all illustrations bearing on the past and present life of the locality. I say present, because to-day will soon be yesterday, and the most trivial passing things rapidly become history. Every library should endeavour to get in touch with the local photographic societies, so that, eventually, a systematic and complete photographic survey of the locality may be made. Paintings, drawings, picture postcards, illustrated advertisements, portraits, and prints from local magazines, should be collected, as they will all be of use to the local historian. Collections of lantern slides will also be found useful when a library gives series of lectures.

The collection of portraits is the next in importance to local illustrations. When one has read a description of a well-known personage, one is usually anxious to see a portrait in order to obtain a clearer conception of the person than can be obtained from the most elaborate verbal description. The dry-as-dust history receives an infusion of life if it is well filled with the forms and faces of the makers of history. Portraits of all kinds—great scientists, artists, authors, monarchs, statesmen, and even those of notable criminals—should be collected. All illustrate history and character. Every science and art, and indeed every phase of life, produces illustrations which should be preserved and made accessible to the public. One has only to consider the vast amount of illustrated literature published daily, and remember how little of it is preserved and yet how interesting it would undoubtedly prove to after generations, to see at once how simple and yet how valuable the collection of these things would prove. If a collection had been made or even a selection of the pictures relating to the Boer War, there is no doubt that we should have possessed a more educational work than the "Times" History.

Besides these somewhat untechnical collections, certain sections of the library can be illustrated by photographic collections. For example, a series of photographs illustrating the history of astronomy, would be very valuable and interesting, and such a collection can be obtained quite cheaply. The Board of Education, South Kensington, issue photographs in astronomy, art woodwork, lace, pottery, and various antiques, all of which are splendid examples of the best art, and are of the greatest value to students and craftsmen, besides being very interesting to the general reader.

In addition to these illustrations, there are the illustrations in books which if indexed would be of greater use than they are at present. How often we are asked for an illustration of one thing or another, and are not always able to find what we want. An index or catalogue of the illustrations in the better type of book would be very useful, and we should be able to turn up any illustration wanted, at once.

Now, a few practical considerations: collecting, classifying, and indexing. Every week on a stated day, one of the assistants should go through all ephemeral literature and extract all the illustrations. A senior assistant should then glance rapidly through them, and reject all evidently unsuitable material: those it is decided to keep can be laid aside for further treatment. In the case of picture postcards, a tactful application to the local publishers of these would probably ensure a copy of every local post-card being sent to the library.

To facilitate handling and for better preservation, all illustrations shall be mounted. Of course some illustrations will be too large for this, but two sizes of mounts will usually be found sufficient. The two sizes suggested are (1) 10in. by 12in., and (2) 10½in. by 14½in. From experience the best material for mounts proves to be the kind known as "Rhinos Mecca," manufactured by Messrs. Lindenmeyer, of Upper Thames Street. On to these mounts the illustrations should be carefully pasted, the most suitable adhesive being Higgins' "Photo Mounter." A small label should be placed in the upper right hand corner of the mount, stating the date, subject, the source of the illustration, together with the classification and other library marks.

After mounting, the next process is to classify the illustrations. The classification should be the same as that used for the books. The portrait collection should be arranged first by subject and then alphabetically. A special classification is advisable for the collection of local illustrations, and this will most probably be devised by the Chief Librarian.

A catalogue or index of the illustrations is necessary, and a card catalogue under subject, title where necessary, and author where possible. The portrait collection should be indexed alphabetically and by subject. The illustrations should be then stored in boxes made to lie flat on the shelf.

All illustrations are of course available for reference use, but they should also be available for study at home, as many will require long and careful study. Readers should be allowed to have a special "Illustration" ticket, on which four or perhaps six illustrations might be borrowed. It is necessary to provide portfolios made of some strong cloth or buckram, and waterproof if possible, for readers to convey the illustrations to and from the library. These portfolios should bear a label giving conditions of the loan and any other rules necessary. There are other uses the illustrations can be put to. For example, teachers will find them of great value when preparing and giving their lessons, and a teacher should be allowed to have as many illustrations as he or she wants; there should be no limit.

SOME AIDS TO READERS: PRINTED AND MECHANICAL.

By W. B. THORNE, District Librarian, Bromley Library, Poplar, E.

Lord Rosebery, John Morley, H. G. Wells, and other prominent men of the day have from time to time urged the necessity for the provision in public libraries of some description of guides to readers. Their argument that among so much chaff it is hard for an inexperienced person to find the grains of wheat is perfectly valid, although their proposals for the solution of the difficulty are not always practicable. If we put ourselves in the place of a reader of average intelligence, a genuine seeker after knowledge, but having only small acquaintance with the domain of literature, we shall realise in the most forcible manner the very real need there is for supplying guides to the undiscovered country which lies on the other side of the indicator. We who have had the training and experience know the rich mines of learning, the delightful pastures of culture and the oases of refreshment which exist there; let us therefore strive as we best can to reveal this richness and abundance to those with whom we come in contact in our professional capacity.

It must be remembered that we have all kinds of individuals to cater for, and further, were it possible to provide a set of aids which were satisfactory in one library, it would by no means follow that they would work equally well in a library situated in a different district. It does not appear probable that all libraries could be absolutely uniform in this respect. Our clients are male and female, old and young, educated and uneducated, technical and non-technical, interested and indifferent; all

have to be considered from a different standpoint and catered for accordingly. Of course it is not to be supposed that we can actually classify them thus, and send each class to a particular aid supplied for it, but we must so blend advantages in every aid that it may be intelligible and useful to all.

The principal and most valuable guides to reading are naturally bibliographical works, and there are more or less complete bibliographies in existence now of nearly every conceivable subject, in fact so much is this the case that bibliographies of bibliographies are necessary. I do not think the average public library possesses many bibliographical works; probably they may be dispensed with more easily than some would have us think, but in a large library where considerable research is done, it seems to me that there cannot be too many provided. The librarian of course must be possessed of some such tools for the purpose of strengthening his stock, and for advising readers when occasion demands. Works like Sonnenschein's "Best Books" and "A Reader's Guide," the A.L.A. Catalogue, English Catalogue of Books, Fortescue's Subject Indexes, and Sargent and Whishaw's Guide no self-respecting library can afford to be without, and there are others which would be determined by the requirements of the locality.

The aids, however, which will be most useful to the reader, and which will have most value in influencing his selection of books will be those produced by the librarian. The reader is naturally brought into direct contact with catalogues, reading lists, bulletins, etc., and it is only the more advanced individual who requires anything beyond these; therefore I venture the opinion that we should concentrate a large part of our care and thought in the compilation of such helps. Fortunately the truth of this is now generally recognised, and the majority of librarians are sincerely in earnest in their endeavours to make their catalogues as easily intelligible and informative as they are able. Cataloguing combined with its correlative, annotation, is to-day something vastly different from list-making which prevailed only a few years ago, and the signs of the times are that still greater progress will be made until descriptive graded hand-lists to all classes of literature are an accomplished fact.

The catalogue must of necessity be our prime guide for the reader; every borrower sees it and expects it to be forthcoming when asked for. All other efforts we make in the shape of bulletins, reading-lists, etc., may be regarded as extras; a number of people will have nothing to do with them, they will not buy them, they most emphatically decline to be interested in them, they persist in being content with the fiction portion of their catalogue. With the processes entailed in the production of special reading lists and bibliographical essays I will not weary you; most of you no doubt are fully acquainted with them. Their value, judiciously and intelligently compiled, is inestimable, but I pass over all this which is obvious to dwell for a few moments on methods which might be employed to provoke a healthy curiosity in those persistently disinterested persons I mentioned just now. It is exactly these I think you will agree we are most anxious to reach; with the real student we know how to deal; it is comparatively easy to cater for the dilettante reader; but to influence the unconcerned is indeed hard. As I said before, our aim in this connection must be to provoke curiosity, to arouse the individual into recognising that there are more things in heaven and earth than have hitherto been dreamed of in his philosophy; in short, to help people to discover themselves. In doing this our methods for the present can only be primitive and simple; we must adopt ideas from wherever we can find them, commercial enterprise affording a very useful parallel in this respect.

For this purpose one of the most useful agents I know is a wisely administered counter show-case. The unthinking person generally believes all books other than novels to be large, dusty and uninviting; most firmly

convinced is he that they are large. This being so you will at once see the wisdom of putting the actual books before him in a way most likely to attract. To approach success, of course, the case must never be neglected; the selections of books, preferably of a topical nature, must be constantly changed and kept fresh. I do not mean that a different display of books need be made every other day, and naturally some subjects hold the public attention considerably longer than others, but in the ordinary way it is well not to let one topic run for more than one or two months.

The reading-list brightly annotated and prominently placarded will do a great deal to influence the choice of readers. It would be helpful to a number of people to display at the proper season, namely, at the beginning of the long winter evenings, a few suggestions for courses of readings to profitably occupy their leisure. There are often many, especially among the youth of both sexes, who only need a little judicious prompting or assistance in making a decision to take up some subject and go through a systematic course. The subjects put forward need not be abstruse, but should rather incline, I think, to what is called "polite culture." In doing this we should be practically carrying out in a small way what the N.H.R.U. has for its object.

When a work of fiction deals with any particular condition of life, or is of an historical or topographical character, it would be exceedingly useful and instructive to attach to that book some suggestions for further pursuit of the subject in the realms of actual fact. If this practice was more frequently adopted I am of opinion that much good would accrue. This is one way in which we may tempt the fiction reader to get away sometimes from his all-beguiling novel, and I shall be glad to learn from the discussion that ensues of other methods which have been devised to secure the same ends. Where a fiction catalogue or indicator key is published separately from the general catalogue, there is some advantage in inserting within the covers a concise guide to the higher class of novelist with brief descriptions of the type of novel produced. It can be conveniently divided into two parts as "Authors recommended to male readers" and "Authors recommended to female readers." Such a guide will frequently evoke appreciation from readers, but unfortunately it is often overlooked, as the average individual is remarkably unobservant.

Most librarians sooner or later publish a chronological list of the historical novels contained in their respective libraries, very useful in its way and generally much appreciated; but would it not be an improvement to go further and incorporate with it, at the end of each period, a guide to a select few of the principal histories also dealing with the period?

The bibliographical article and the reading list I have already referred to, and I imagine they must be useful levers in elevating the public taste, but I am sorry to say I cannot speak from experience. There appears to be no reason why, having been presented in the library bulletin, they should not be reprinted in the local Press and thus reach a larger audience. As I have also said before, I will not bore you with details of their production, but refer you to an admirable description of the process from the pen of Mr. J. D. Stewart which appeared in the "Library Assistant" in November, 1904.

In considering the subject of aids to readers we must not overlook the requirements of our juvenile clients. Where there are special children's rooms there is no reason why the pictorial reading list should not be developed to a very large extent. Round the walls would be good pictures of animals, natural history objects, scenes in foreign countries, historical occurrences and the like. In close proximity with these would be attractively produced reading lists directly bearing upon each picture; in fact, the reading list would be written as it were round the illustration, and not the picture selected to illustrate the reading list. The whole thing would be kept constantly fresh, care being taken to ascertain whether

there was any one topic predominant in the minds of the children at any particular time, as for instance when the annual essay on the prevention of cruelty to animals comes round. Where no separate children's room exists a good deal could be done with a special notice board for the youngsters and a shelf in the counter show-case allocated to books most suitable for their requirements.

It has often been urged that there is great need for a connecting link between the periodical rooms and the lending and reference departments. To some extent we have, I think, succeeded in providing this link by attaching to the insides of the periodical cases slips which draw attention to both the book departments. For example, in the "Engineer" case is a brief note which states that books on engineering can be had for perusal in the reference room, and also that certain works can be borrowed for home reading on filling up the necessary form. The idea emanates from my senior assistant—Mr. C. Henly, and I have not heard of its being practised before.

In concluding, I should like to say that the subject of the paper is one in which I am most keenly interested; my desire is always that the public library may be a very real influence for good. To reflect on the splendid opportunities there are in the public library for self-culture, and to think how few realise the truth of this is to me very distressing. I am proud to be a member of a profession which has in the exercise of its duties so many opportunities for being of service to its fellow men. This we should regard as a distinct privilege: it is no small thing to be in such a position, and few other professions offer such facilities. Naturally, privileges bring corresponding responsibilities, and our responsibility lies in the fact that we must always be earnestly endeavouring to make the most of the resources at our disposal, that our clients, the public, may reap the greatest possible advantage from them.

PERSONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN STAFF AND READER.

By W. R. B. PRIDEAUX, B.A., The Library, Royal College of Physicians.

One of the chief differences between American and British libraries is that in America they make more use of mechanical contrivances of every kind. These are excellent things in their way, and serve to accelerate the library service, but they reduce the direct relations of staff and readers to a minimum. In an article in the August number of the "Library Journal" a librarian boasts that some of the most constant users of the library under his charge scarcely visit it from year's end to year's end. Of course in this case there are relations between staff and readers, but they are through an intermediary—a wire. Sometimes in America the librarian himself never sees any readers at all, as he has an office quite away from the library, perhaps even in another street. I will leave, however, the fruitful subject of the reaction of mechanism on library economy to the pen of Mr. H. G. Wells. Over here the relations of staff and public are more direct, and therefore in a way more important.

It is a truism that the popularity of a library depends on the junior assistants. Even one rude assistant can make a library unpopular. Now I do not suppose that anyone here to-night would consciously treat a reader with rudeness, but I appeal to the seniors here present and to those who will soon become seniors—that is, to all of you—to impress duly upon those under them the primary importance of treating readers with politeness and consideration—and the best way to make this impression is by example.

Any definite complaints or suggestions on the part of readers are better entered on forms or in a book provided for that purpose, with a personal assurance from the assistant that they will receive the librarian's

attention. Most of these suggestions will be found impracticable, and for that reason they are better entered on detachable slips rather than in a book. In the latter case the librarian has to write opposite to them from time to time whether the suggestion has been carried out, the book purchased, etc., which leads to a series of such entries as "Not recommended by the Committee," "Not considered advisable," "Under consideration," and so on. Complainants generally glance through a page or two of the suggestion book before adding their own grievance or idea. On seeing such statements as the above they are apt to close the book in a huff, remarking "I see it is no use entering any suggestions, as they are never attended to." If detached forms are used, notification in writing may be sent to the suggester after the matter has been considered by the Committee. On the other hand, suggestions by readers should always receive careful consideration, as sometimes they are really of value. Books recommended by readers should be attended to, though they will often be found to be of too special a character to warrant their being purchased by a general library.

A new visitant to the library can usually be detected by his hesitating manner of advance. He comes a little way within the door, and then to all seeming becomes intently absorbed in the first thing that meets his eye. The fact of the matter is that readers very often have no definite want on their first visit to the library; they come to spy out the fatness of the land—to discover whether they can get any pleasure or profit from the institution. And here comes in the value of conspicuous notices on the walls. The reader may not pluck up courage to make any inquiries of the assistant, or he may have nothing particular to ask, but be sure that after the aforementioned period of absorption he will take a good look round the room, and his eye should be met by such notices as "Borrowers' Forms may be obtained at the Counter," "All information given by the Assistant in Charge," or the word "Enquiries" written conspicuously over the attendant's desk. The assistant on his part should show that he is alive to what is going on in the room. On the one hand he should not stare, on the other he should not seem so intent on his work that any interruption would be unwelcome. He should look up occasionally, and be ready to meet enquirers half way.

Silence—the maintenance of which occasionally causes the relations between staff and readers to become a little strained—is best secured by having notices placed in various parts of the room. When someone begins talking, the other readers' convenience is the criterion of interference, and not red tape. When the talking is in a low tone and no one appears to be annoyed by it, there is not much harm in letting it go on, but when, for example, two old friends meet accidentally in the reading-room, slap one another on the back and begin asking after one another's health in cheery tones, it is time to intervene. Do not go up to them and say sourly, "Less noise, please," but in your suavest and blandest manner, and with a graceful wave of the hand to the nearest placard, say, "I beg to call your attention to this notice." You will find this indirect method of request much easier than the direct, and it is quite as effective, as it shows the delinquents that they are actually breaking a rule, and are not merely subject to the caprices of an assistant.

In the Reference Room you will frequently be called upon to explain the method of using the subject-catalogue—especially if it be upon cards. Guide cards in particular prove a difficulty. The public seems hardly able to grasp the fact that the guide cards are merely guide cards, and do not display all the headings employed in the catalogue. Such a misunderstanding can only be put right by reiterated and copious explanations that the subject-headings are written along the top of the cards, and that the guide-cards are only an alphabetical labour-saving device.

What I have been saying hitherto applies chiefly to the Reference

Room, and I cannot speak from personal experience of the duties of a busy lending department. When I say that I cannot speak from personal experience I mean that I cannot speak from experience as a librarian, for as one of the public I am a constant user of public libraries whenever I get a chance. As a member of the public, one or two points have suggested themselves to me. In the first place it is best not to throw a book to a reader like a bone to a dog. The half-second extra required to place the book quietly on the issue counter is well expended. Secondly readers do not like to be kept waiting to be attended to till the assistant behind the counter has finished a paragraph in his favourite newspaper, still less to wait until the assistant has finished discussing some knotty point with one of his colleagues. Readers are generally very patient when they feel that there is some real reason for delay, but they soon grow restive when they suspect that it is due merely to slackness. Thirdly, readers should be attended to as far as possible in the order in which they hand in their application forms. This is not always possible in indicator libraries, where at crowded hours of the day several forms are lying at the same time on the issue desk; but care should be taken not to fall into the trap of the pushful borrower who thrusts forward his form in such a position as to catch the eye.

Let us in conclusion turn for a moment to the more general aspects of our subject. As one mounts higher in the professional scale the tendency is to have less and less direct communication with the reader; the work becomes more and more administrative. Though this is a necessary tendency to a greater or less degree, let us see to it that no false barrier of pride is raised between us and our clients. Our whole work is vitalised by coming into immediate contact with the requirements of those whom we are there to help. Let us remember the example of such men as Henry Bradshaw, who was always accessible to the humblest reader, even to the detriment of work which seemed of far more importance in the eyes of the world. Let us strive after that highest duty—willing service of our master the public.

ANNUAL DINNER.

The Ninth Annual Dinner of the L.A.A., held at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, E.C., on Wednesday evening, November 7th, was a complete success. There can be no doubt that this function has now fully established itself, and that it has become entitled to recognition as the most enjoyable social function of the year in the library world. On this occasion the chair was occupied by Mr. W. B. Thorne (Chairman of the Association), and the Dinner was attended by nearly 80 members and friends, including a fair number of ladies. Among the librarians present were Messrs. Tedder, Baker, Preece, Jast, Peplow, Bond and Bull.

After the tables had been cleared, and the loyal toasts duly honoured, Mr. Rees submitted "The Library Association." He remarked that although this was a toast which was a regular feature of the Dinners it was no empty form. Behind it were the good wishes of the junior Association for the welfare of the senior Association.

Mr. Baker responded. Referring to the examination scheme of the Library Association, he said there seemed to be an impression that it was intended to raise the standard of qualification. He was partly responsible for this idea, but as yet the suggestions which he had made had not been officially sanctioned. He was afraid, however, that his proposals had been misunderstood, probably owing to the fact that his paper had not yet appeared in print. His suggestions would not make the examinations more difficult. Indeed, his first proposal was to make them easier by introducing a preliminary examination. At present it was impossible to take any subject by instalments. Although the present examination scheme would not be interfered with, except in a few small details, he did

propose one extension of the examinations which would be quite optional. As the library movement grew they must expect greater competition from outsiders. His object in proposing the extension referred to was to resist this competition. His idea was that after assistants had taken their certificates in librarianship they could take a *degree* in librarianship. Thus he would go in for an extension of the educational scheme. In conclusion, although it might be somewhat irregular, he would ask them to drink to the health of Mr. Prideaux, the first diplomatist of the Library Association.

Mr. Tedder, in proposing the toast of "The Library Assistants' Association," said he had watched their upward progress with satisfaction. They were doing an admirable work. They had an excellent periodical to which he was not merely a subscriber, but of which he was a regular reader, and they had arranged a splendid programme for the winter. He was glad that the Association not only devoted itself to serious matters but also "what he might call the joys of life." After referring to the happy relations which existed between the Library Association and the L.A.A., Mr. Tedder said it was a matter for congratulation that so many assistants had passed the professional examinations. He had a tender feeling for the unsuccessful candidates, but he hoped these would remember that it was no disgrace not to have achieved success. The disgrace was in not making the attempt. Before he sat down he should like to give them a word of advice. Young people should remember that youth is a very pleasant and happy time. Let them keep young as long as possible; let them keep their simplicity of mind, and keep some corner sacred to poetry and romance. It was not well to be too practical. They might leave to older people the sordid cares of life and anxieties for the future. These were perhaps unconventional recommendations, but he urged them to try and keep some part of their minds fresh, and to do away with cynicism and everything of that kind.

Mr. Sayers acknowledged the toast.

Mr. Roebeck next proposed the toast "The Visitors," in which he included the artistes, and Mr. Bond responded for the visitors. "The Chairman" was proposed by Mr. J. D. Young, and Mr. Thorne in replying asked those present to drink to the health of Mr. Chambers, to whose untiring efforts much of the success of the evening was due. Mr. Chambers returned thanks, and the company dispersed after heartily united in singing—Scotch-wise, with hands joined—"Auld Lang Syne."

Between the speeches, a lengthy musical programme was gone through. Miss Lily Moslin delighted all with her pianoforte solos, while her brother, Mr. Alan M. Moslin, deepened the impression he has already made as a talented performer on the violin. The songs of Miss Amy Rees, Miss Edith Upton, Mr. W. B. Young, Mr. C. J. Courtney, and Mr. Willie Edmonds (humorous) were much enjoyed. A cornet solo by Mr. Crouch was excellently rendered, and Mr. W. G. Watson exhibited great ability as a reciter. The accompaniments were shared by Miss Moslin and Miss Rees.

THE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Committee was held at the Public Library, Shoreditch, on 21st November. The Committee contemplated a series of visits to the best libraries of London on the afternoons of the monthly meetings. The formation of a Yorkshire Branch, having headquarters at Leeds, was discussed, and the suggestions of the gentlemen moving in the matter approved. It was directed that the best wishes for the future of the Branch be forwarded. Arrangements for a L.A.A. football match were undertaken by Mr. Peplow, the Assistant Hon. Secretary.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the "Library Assistant"

Correspondence Class on Classification.

Sir,—It was with more than ordinary interest that I read the communication of A. S. in last month's "Library Assistant," but as he has so thoroughly misunderstood my meaning I feel impelled to do my best to enlighten him. My suggestion that a correspondence class on classification should be inaugurated arose after giving the matter some consideration. If your correspondent will consider (1) the low percentage which classification has in comparison with the other practical subjects of the L. A. Examination programme; (2) the enormous advantages of systematic classification; and (3) the present lack in this respect generally he ought to welcome, rather than deprecate, any suggestion which would tend to ameliorate those conditions no matter whether the suggestion comes from Glasgow or Timbuctoo.

A. S. states that while recognising the *great value* (the italics are mine) of the correspondence class, he cannot regard it as indispensable as the way has so clearly been mapped out in Mr. Brown's "Annotated Syllabus."⁷ Now it was because I also recognised the "great value" of a correspondence class that I advocated one, and unwittingly your correspondent has seconded me. I certainly agree with him in praising Mr. Brown's "Syllabus," but if we carry the argument of A. S. to a logical conclusion we should have no correspondence classes in Sections 2, 4, 5, and 6, for Mr. Brown has outlined them too. A. S. describes Glasgow's system of district libraries, and the method of book selection and classification. This part, however, of the communication might have been deleted without its losing anything. I was not discussing Glasgow's needs (it does not require anyone to do that), but was dealing with a general question. My last point is this. A. S. says that the provincial man by private study did equally as well as his Metropolitan brother who has all the advantages of the London School of Economics classes and private tuition. Quite so. But does A. S. consider the respective numbers of the London and provincial assistants. If he does, and still considers that the provincial assistants are sufficiently represented, I take exception. It was for the purpose of increasing the number of candidates that I suggested a correspondence class whereby this end might be attained. The want of such a class is, I am sure, sorely felt, and when one considers that this subject—leaving out of consideration literary history—is made the only exception, a very grave error is apparent.

BIBLION.

Glasgow.

L. A. EXAMINATION.**Distribution of Certificates.**

The Certificates gained at the last professional examination of the Library Association will be distributed by Mr. Sidney Webb, LL.B., L.C.C., at a special meeting to be held at the London School of Economics on Wednesday, January 9th, 1907, at 8 p.m. The Council of the Library Association cordially invites members of the Library Assistants' Association to be present, as well as friends of those who have gained certificates.

FOOTBALL MATCH.

On February 13th there will be a football match between the L.A.A. and the Wednesday Athletic F.C. (West Ham), on their ground at Leyton. The nearest station is Leyton (G.E.R.), and the ground is at Temple Mills. A dressing room and every requisite for the game are provided on the field. Any members desiring to play should send their names, and state their usual places in the field, to Mr. William A. Peplow, Assistant Hon. Sec., Central Library, Croydon.

LIBRARY ASSOCIATION CORRESPONDENCE CLASSES.

The Education Committee have arranged for a third series of Correspondence Classes to be conducted during the Session 1906-7. The undermentioned classes will be conducted by those gentlemen who act as lecturers in the same subjects at the London School of Economics, the sections being those of the Examination Syllabus of the Library Association:—

Section IV.—Cataloguing. Mr. Quinn, commencing Dec. 1st, 1906.

Section V.—Library History and Organization. Mr. Brown, commencing December 1st, 1906.

Section VI.—Practical Library Administration. Mr. Brown, commencing February 2nd, 1907.

Ten lessons will be given in each subject, and the classes will conclude just before the examinations in May, 1907.

The courses will, as a rule, be restricted to students living outside the London County Council area, but assistants living within the area who forward a certificate, signed by their chief, that they are unable to be present during the times that the classes are held at the London School of Economics, may also be admitted as students.

The fee for each course will be 10s., payable in advance. Further information may be obtained from the Hon. Sec., L.A. Education Committee, Whitcomb House, Whitcomb Street, Pall Mall, S.W.

NOTICE TO LIBRARY ASSISTANTS.

MESSRS. Kegan Paul and Co. have kindly offered to supply two of their publications at half price to library assistants, or to students for the Library Association Examinations. These publications are:—

"Short History of English Printing," by H. R. Plomer.

"English Book Collectors," by W. Y. Fletcher.

They are volumes in the "English Bookman's Library," and are published at 10s. 6d. net each.

Applications (enclosing 5s. 6d. for each volume applied for, which will cover cost of postage) should be made to the Assistant Secretary, Whitcomb House, Whitcomb Street, Pall Mall East, London, S.W.

It is hoped to announce shortly similar offers from other publishers.

APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS.

HUDSON, Mr. O. C., Librarian, Goole, to be Librarian, Cheshunt.

COULSON, Mr. THOMAS, Assistant, Sunderland, to be Librarian-in-charge of the Quay Park Road Branch, Belfast Public Libraries.

GILL, Mr. A. K., Librarian, St. Olave's Branch, Bermondsey, to be Librarian, Twickenham.

SANDERSON, Mr. RUPERT, Senior Assistant, Central Library, Bolton, to be Assistant-in-charge.

*BACON, Mr. S., Third Assistant, Whitechapel, to be Second Assistant.

*VALE, Mr. G. F., Junior Assistant, St. George, Stepney, to be Third Assistant, Whitechapel.

*MATTHEWS, Mr. H., to be Junior Assistant, St. George Stepney.

* Member of the L.A.A.

NEW MEMBERS.

Junior: Messrs. HORACE MATTHEWS (St. George, Stepney) and R. E. SMITHER (Brighton).